

sensation is attractive and largely free from typographical errors. There is a combined subject and name index; this seems to be less detailed than it could be, particularly in regard to the indexing of authors. These reservations notwithstanding, *Wings of Illusion* is highly recommended.

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HISTORIA DE LA PARAPSIKOLOGÍA EN LA ARGENTINA [THE HISTORY OF PARAPSYCHOLOGY IN THE ARGENTINE]. By Alejandro Parra. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Author, 1990. Pp. 91. [Available from author at Muñiz 539, Segundo Piso, Departamento A, Buenos Aires, Argentina.] \$10.00, paper.

The parapsychological literature is basically an English-language literature. In part, this is justifiable because most of the rigorous experimental

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and nonexperimental research has been carried out either in English-speaking countries or in countries where the authors have a command of English fluent enough to place their articles in the major parapsychological journals. In addition, these countries represent the industrial, technological, "developed" nations where at least a few people have enough job security to pursue parapsychological interests on either a part-time or full-time basis. However, some key parapsychological research studies have been carried out in non-English speaking and/or "developing" countries as well. In addition, historians of parapsychology need information about the worldwide development of the field. Therefore, Alejandro Parra's comprehensive survey of Argentine parapsychology comes as a pleasant—and important—surprise.

The History of Parapsychology in the Argentine serves three key functions. It surveys the history of Argentine parapsychology; it discusses the social milieu in which Argentine parapsychology developed; and it underscores key investigators and their findings.

Parra divides his historical survey into four general periods: spiritism (1869-1896), mesmerism (1896-1924), "metapsychics" (which can be translated as "psychical studies") (1924-1953), and parapsychology (beginning about 1953). The parapsychological era has three subdivisions: parapsychology in private institutions (1953-1960), in university settings (1960-1970), and in various settings outside of universities (beginning about 1970).

Parra claims that there were two subdivisions in the spiritism era: 1869 to 1877 and 1877 to 1896. The first phase was marked by the impact of Allan Kardec's writings, which made an even greater impression in neighboring Brazil. Kardec was a French educator whose best known works, *The Spirit's Book* and *The Medium's Book*, provided a world view as well as a pair of manuals for "spiritists" (a term that was coined to distinguish them from the "spiritualists" operating in the United States). Spiritism was highly organized by 1877 and eventually registered some 15,000 followers. But an Argentine Society of Magnetism was formed in 1896, which sponsored research on purported psychic phenomena produced by the "magnetic passes" developed by another French practitioner—Franz Anton Mesmer. The society had its own laboratory and eventually metamorphosed into the Scientific Society of Psychic Studies (i.e., "Metapsychics"), which began to interfere with the European psychical research societies. "Psychic photography" was scrutinized in the first decade of the 1900s, as were physical mediumship and telepathic communication.

From a sociological point of view, Western European movements, especially those of France, strongly influenced various aspects of Argentine life. Another organization, the Scientific Society for Psychical Studies, was established in 1912 with the French Nobel laureate (and psychical researcher) Charles Richet as honorary president. According to Parra, Richet used the term "metapsychics" or "psychical studies" to refer to "the science that studies phenomena which seem to operate as a result of

unknown forces." The popularity of "metapsychics" increased after the First World War left Argentines a legacy of disillusionment and despair that needed an antidote. Books about spiritism and mesmerism continued to be published, and the historical eras identified by Parra were far from discrete. Again, they reflected a European influence felt to be intellectually sophisticated. This link with the intellectual tradition brought parapsychology into several Argentine universities, but other social forces eventually terminated academic laboratory work and courses.

The United States began to influence Argentine parapsychology once the research work of J. B. Rhine became known. A variety of institutes attempted to replicate and extend Rhine's experiments, and Parra identifies several individuals who led this initiative. They include Orlando Canavesio (1915-1957), a psychiatrist who studied the EEG correlates of ESP performance; José Fernández (1893-1967), an engineer who applied probability theory to ESP research; J. R. Musso (1917-1989), an economist and psychologist who conducted "sheep/goat" tests with school children and authored a highly regarded free-response ESP test; E. Novillo-Paull (1919-1989), a Jesuit priest who studied PK influence on plants; and the last known contemporary Argentine parapsychologists, Naim Kreiman and Dora Ivnisky, who have been instrumental in maintaining the publication of *Cuadernos de Parapsicología* and who (together or separately) have conducted a variety of ESP experiments studying such variables as memory, emotion, and feedback.

Parra has done an exemplary piece of scholarly research, and his book should give salience to the neglected field of Latin American parapsychology. He has nicely documented European and North American influences on Argentine thought, research, and practice, but he has left the reader uninformed as to whether or not a characteristic Argentine mode ever developed. Parapsychology in the United States attempted to demonstrate rigor by aping the behavioristic paradigm for several decades; one might speculate whether Latin Americans found phenomenology, fieldwork, and/or participant observation more congruent with their culture, producing data that were equally rigorous but perhaps richer in meaning and information.

It also would have been useful for Parra to summarize the major accomplishments of Argentine parapsychology, as demonstrated by the number of citations in English-language literature reviews of articles by Musso, Novillo-Paull, Kreiman, and others. He also could have tabulated the types of research methods used by Argentine investigators as reported in their publications; this would have given the reader a clue as to whether or not a national style exists—or ever existed. Nor does he address the divisiveness that appears to characterize contemporary Argentinean parapsychology.

Nevertheless, Parra has produced a groundbreaking book that contains several unique facets. His historical survey is embellished by quotations from the transcripts of a pertinent legislative debate, and by the revelation

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that at one point government officials were associated with the field (but, mercifully, he omits discussion of the involvement of Isabel Perón with an astrologer during her brief term as head of state).

There are few countries in the world in which parapsychology can claim to have established scientific roots. The hallmarks of this claim are one or more professional organizations, one or more scientific journals, and a body of parapsychological researchers. Parra has elevated Argentina to this small assemblage—an assembly not much larger than the highly vaunted "nuclear club," and one that future historians might laud as having made a more noble contribution to human knowledge and achievement.

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PHYSICAL COSMOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY. Edited by John Leslie.
New York: Macmillan, 1990. Pp. vii + 277. \$13.00, paper. L.G.
89-12263. ISBN 0-02-370021-1.

Physical Cosmology and Philosophy, edited by John Leslie, is a collection of essays dealing with the anthropic principle (i.e., the idea that the universe seems to be rather delicately designed in such a way as to support the presence of intelligent observers). There are several ways in which the universe seems to be specifically fine-tuned so as to allow life to evolve. For instance, as physicist Paul Davies points out in his contribution to the volume, if the rate of expansion of the universe had differed from what is actually observed value by as little as one part in 10^{18} , either all matter would have collapsed in a black hole or the expansion rate would have been too great to allow galaxies and stars to form. In either event, life would not have evolved. Also, if the ratios of the strengths of the four fundamental forces had been slightly different, life (or at least carbon-based life) could not have emerged. If the number of spatial dimensions of the universe had been other than three, planetary orbits would not be stable, resulting in an environment hostile to life.

The presence of so many improbable coincidences makes it seem as though the universe has been designed (perhaps by an intelligent Creator?) in such a way as to permit the existence of conscious observers. The 21 contributions in *Physical Cosmology and Philosophy* each try to grapple with this apparent evidence of purposiveness in the cosmos. Many of them